



Regional Service Council Minutes Region # 16

Meeting Date: February 28, 2008
Meeting Location: Haub Steak House, Haubstadt, Indiana

Council Members Present: Regional Manager Virginia Combs
Larry Marchino
Susan Blackburn
David Straw
Julie Weeks
Judge Timothy Crowley
Suzanne Draper
Chris Hoehn

Council Members Absent: Judge Brett Niemeier
Steve Cunningham
Judge David Kelley

Others In Attendance: Judge Joseph Verkamp
Judith Harper
Lark Buckman
Gayle Edelen
Jara Dillingham (The Villages)
Mike Singleton (Ireland & Luzio)
Dr. John Ireland (Ireland & Luzio)
Cynthia Smith (Youth Service Bureau)
Ann Hecht (Children & Family Services)
Emily Heineke (Samaritan Center)
Lynne Rump (Children & Family Services)
Natalie Kassenbrock (Ireland & Luzio)

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Called to Order at: 5:03 p.m. (6:03 p.m. Indianapolis time) by Regional Manager Virginia Combs.

1. Mrs. Combs welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves. The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes of the October 25th meeting had been emailed to all Council members prior to the meeting. On a motion by Chris

Hoehn, seconded by Susan Blackburn, the minutes of the October 25, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

2. Community Partners Update – Mike Singleton from the Community Partners for Child Safety Program through Ireland Home Based Services distributed four handouts: a Closed Case Summary for December 2007, a Monthly Summary from December 2007, Actual Operating Expenses for 4/1/06 – 12/31/07, and Projected Expenses for 1/1/08 – 2/23/08. Operating expenses worksheets show start-up expenses and service delivery expenses by county by month. There was a carryover of \$171,943.18 to the 2008 budget. If there are any funds left over this year, they will not carry over to the 2009 budget.

Ireland Home Based Services is now serving more families, helping them to reach their goals quicker and more efficiently. According to a satisfaction survey at the end of the service period, families feel that they have benefited by meeting the goals that had been set.

Natalie Kassenbrock with Ireland Home Based Services works with the Region 17 counties and would like to assist Region 16 also. Parenting classes are being provided quarterly in Region 17 counties on a voluntary basis and in a group setting. She has been partnering with Probation staff for referrals by reminding them of the help available to fill various gaps in services for families. Natalie has also offered snacks and incentives such as gift cards from Dollar General Store to parents for participating in all their scheduled classes. A vote will be taken at the April meeting about Natalie becoming a liaison for the counties in Region 16 since Michael Singleton is to be responsible for other duties with Ireland.

Then Dr. Ireland suggested looking at what services/classes are not being utilized in the region and then figure what other needs there are for which services could be developed. Transportation was mentioned as a problem in some areas without public transportation.

3. Nominating Committee Slate – Larry Marchino distributed a handout of the Regional Service Council members who have agreed to be nominated as voting members. A motion was proposed by the Nominating Committee to accept the slate and was seconded by Judy Harper. All Council members responded in favor of acceptance.

Gini Combs thanked the Nominating Committee and the people who agreed to serve. She also thanked the past voting members for their service to the Council.

The voting members of the Region 16 Regional Service Council will be:

Judge Joseph Verkamp, Pike County
Judge David O. Kelly, Warrick County
Judge Robert R. Aylsworth, Warrick County
Lark Buckman, Vanderburgh County Director
Judy Harper, Warrick County Director
Larry Marchino, Knox County Director
Gayle Edelen, Gibson County FCM Supervisor
Aaron Simpson Pike County FCM
Suzanne Draper, Vanderburgh County CASA Director
Sebrina Martin, Vanderburgh County Foster Parent

4. Practice Reform Update – Susan Blackburn explained that Peer Coaches from each county are being developed and trained. Their job is to then train all the Family Case Managers in facilitation of child and family team meetings. All Directors and Supervisors have also attended the peer coach training. By July 1st, all FCM's in Region 16 will be trained to conduct Child and Family Team meetings.

Regional Services Council member, Julie Weeks, is a peer coach trainer in Pike County. She trains three facilitators per month. Julie picks a family and sets a date to hold a meeting with the family. Julie conducts the meeting and the FCM observes. Then the FCM arranges and conducts a family meeting with Julie observing. It takes about a month to accomplish this facilitation training.

The hope is that families can learn to conduct their own meetings and continue after the Department of Child Services is out of their lives. Gini Combs said that feedback is very positive that we are receiving from families and staff that have been involved in these child and family team meetings. There will be some families that will not participate, but in those cases DCS will work with the children and their support system.

5. Child Welfare Services and IV-B Funding Updates – Child Welfare Services funding has shifted \$33,000 to the Community Partners program. The IV-B bidding process is now underway. Gini and the Directors will score the proposals that have been received from providers and develop some recommendations to bring to the Regional Service Council at the April 24th meeting. The RSC must approve the recommendations for DCS to receive the funding for services. The deadline for sending our approved recommendations to Indianapolis is May 7th. Information will be sent prior to the April meeting for members to study.

6. Judges' Review of Current Services – Gini asked if there were any recommendations for missing services in our region. Transportation is a concern in smaller communities that have no public transportation available. There is a need for service providers to go to the family's home. Natalie Kassenbrock mentioned a gas voucher program in Region 17 that is available through some churches. Some of the service dollars could be used for transportation costs connected with doctor/therapy appointments. Dr. Ireland stated that it needs to be part of the treatment plan and families need to be enrolled in the Community Partners program before this program could help with transportation. One suggestion was to get a centrally located gas station and make arrangements with them for reimbursement. Ireland Home Based Services could administer this type of program.

7 Miscellaneous:

Review of Proposed Legislation – House Bill 1165 addresses homeless issues, foster care and education. There would be a 72-hour waiting period before parents are notified that a child is at an emergency shelter. Foster care siblings will be able to visit each other, and the local DCS offices would facilitate these visits. There would be additional access to educational services for homeless and other children up to 21 years of age.

A State Child Fatality Team reviews all child fatalities in the state. Most of the team members are not part of the Department of Child Services. DCS is also now reporting to Central Office about near fatalities as some of these become fatalities.

Judge Brett Niemeier and Judge Robert Aylsworth are part of the committee concerning making placement recommendations for delinquents, but neither could be here tonight. There is concern of the impact on the judicial decision making process as DCS will make the decisions and let Judges pay from county funds. At our next meeting the Judges will be able to let us know what legislation has passed and its effects.

Gini Combs wanted to advise all that one of the things that DCS must do is to file a Termination of Parental Rights when a child has been placed out of the home 15 of 22 months. Central Office has instructed DCS that a motion for dismissal of the TPR cannot be filed without approval of the Regional Manager. Family Case Managers must be prepared for all hearings and not ask for a continuance, but move ahead with permanency for the child.

Staffing Updates – Vanderburgh County has promoted Amber Doty and Michael Summers to FCM Supervisors effective March 10th. They have hired ten additional FCM's. Gibson County has promoted Lori Reinhart as an additional FCM Supervisor and will hire four FCM's in April. Posey County will add one new FCM in April. Knox County has added one more FCM Supervisor and has six FCM's in training currently. Warrick County has four FCM's in training.

Foster parent, Chris Hoehn, informed us that we have been selected to have a 5K walk locally because of the strong support group for foster parents. Any foster parents needing extra credits can attend an upcoming presentation in Louisville focused on fostering. She also would like to get training for new FCM's on foster parenting arranged as she has had very positive feedback about this training in the past.

Lark Buckman informed us that a speaker talking about keeping foster siblings together will be at the Vanderburgh County DCS office on March 25th. The target group of the in-service presentation will be judges, DCS staff, service providers, CASA's and public defenders.

Next Meeting Date, Location and Time: April 24, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. at Haub's Steak House, Haubstadt, Indiana.

Meeting Adjourned at: 6:30 p.m. (7:30 p.m. Indianapolis time).